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UNCLAS ROME 00766

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USAID FOR DCHA/OFDA GGOTTLIEB, PMORRIS; GH/KHILL, DCARROLL  
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USDA FOR OSEC STUMP/PENN/LAMBERT/CAINE,  
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DAKAR FOR USAID/WARP HBOTTEMBERG; OFDA/RDAVIS AND  
JSCICCHITANO  
GENEVA FOR NKYLOH/USAID  
HHS FOR OGHA (STEIGER)  
BRUSSELS FOR USAID/PLERNER AND APHIS/PFERNANDEZ  
PARIS FOR GCARNER  
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FROM THE U.S. MISSION TO THE UN AGENCIES IN ROME

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [KFLU](#) [EAGR](#) [FAID](#) [CASC](#) [SENV](#) [SOCI](#) [TBIO](#) [FAO](#) [WHO](#) [AVIAN](#) [INFLUENZA](#)  
SUBJECT: AVIAN INFLUENZA: WEEKLY UPDATE ON FAO ACTIVITIES  
#2 FOR THE WEEK ENDING MARCH 10, 2006

REF: (A) 05 ROME 3949; (B) 05 ROME 3320; (C) 05 ROME 2979;  
(D) 05 ROME 1142; (E) 05 ROME 3976; (F) 06 ROME 0087; (G) 06  
ROME 0000 (sic); (H) 06 UN ROME 0315; (I) 06 UN ROME 0430;  
(J) 06 UN ROME 0464; (K) 06 UN ROME 0626; (L) UN ROME 0678

¶1. Summary: During three days of high-level and technical level discussions with FAO on March 7-9, a consensus was reached that a more robust global response was needed, with FAO, in coordination with OIE, as the global coordinator. FAO hosted the series of meetings relating to improving emergency response capacity for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). The first was a high-level meeting on March 7 organized at the request of USDA/Animal Plan and Health Inspection Service Administrator Ron DeHaven, in follow-up to an APHIS offer to assist FAO with the implementation of an incident command system (ICS). On March 8, expanded technical discussions continued with the participation of other concerned member states -- Canada, France, Germany and Switzerland -- while bilateral discussions with FAO Animal Production and Health Division (AGA) staff continued on March 9. The meetings concluded with an understanding that FAO/OIE would jointly draft the "Agreement on a Mechanism for the Avian Influenza Emergency Coordination," which would be based on existing structures and frameworks, include all required elements of a crisis management center, and be circulated to donors as well as other stakeholders for input. A press conference organized by the Mission for APHIS Administrator DeHaven resulted in world-wide coverage of the leadership role the U.S. is playing in cooperation with FAO. End Summary.

¶2. At the request of USDA/Animal Plan and Health Inspection Service Administrator Ron DeHaven, FAO hosted a high-level meeting on March 7 to discuss how to enhance its emergency action capabilities for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). The meeting was organized in follow-up to an APHIS offer to assist FAO with implementation of an incident command system (ICS). Louise Fresco, FAO Assistant Director General, chaired the meeting which included the AGA as well as FAO Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division (TCE) staff. Outside participants included a representative from the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) as well as representatives from the European Commission (EC) and the Netherlands who have been having similar discussions with FAO.

¶3. DeHaven stated that the U.S. recognizes there is a need for global coordination of H5N1 activities, and sees FAO, in coordination with OIE, as playing the global coordinator role. The U.S. was willing to provide both human and financial resources to this endeavor. Participants agreed that the steady march of H5N1 across the globe requires a proportional increase in response capability.

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Assessment and the Incident Command System  
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¶4. Discussions centered around two major components of the Global Mechanism: A) assessments; and B) an incident command system (ICS):

A) Assessments: Given that strengthening national veterinary services is critical to the control and eradication of H5N1, it was agreed that assessment of strengths and weaknesses of veterinary services should be a

priority, but that better coordination is needed to avoid duplication of efforts. There was consensus that OIE should continue to play the lead role in conducting assessments based on the Performance, Vision and Strategy tool. The highest risk countries would be given the highest priority for assessments. On the basis of the assessments, medium to long-term veterinary capacity improvement projects would be developed. The short-term emergency projects and medium to long-term projects should be integrated to ensure consistency and effectiveness.

B) Incident Command System: Participants agreed on the need for FAO to coordinate Country Teams for emergency response to outbreaks. The Country Teams would be under the control of FAO, composed of international and national or regional experts, and available for rapid deployment. FAO emphasized that deployment of Country Teams would require an invitation from the affected country. Further work will be needed on the development of expert lists. It was agreed that FAO and OIE should coordinate expert lists using OFFLU, the OIE/FAO network of AI experts, as a starting point. Fresco noted that the FAO Director-General had recently moved to eliminate many of the institutional constraints to hiring, contracting and procurement.

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Global Tactical Plan to be Drafted  
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15. Consensus was reached that FAO, in coordination with OIE, should continue to be the global coordinator, but that a more robust global response is needed from FAO, OIE, donors and other stakeholders. To that end, it was agreed that FAO and OIE would develop a draft tactical plan informally referred to as the "Agreement on a Mechanism for the Avian Influenza Emergency Coordination," which would be largely built on existing structures, in particular the FAO/OIE Global Framework for Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs); the FAO/OIE Global Early Warning and Response System (GLEWS); and the FAO Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Disease Operations (ECTAD). The first draft of the document will be completed and circulated to the meeting participants by March 17. After review and comments due by March 21, the document will be circulated to a wider group including the World Bank, WHO and other UN entities involved in this campaign as well as other stakeholders, including the private sector, wildlife organizations and consumer interest parties. In an effort to garner more political support, the paper could eventually be presented to the 74th OIE General Assembly meeting in May (21-26) and the International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza (IPAPI) Senior Officials Meeting in Vienna in June (6-7).

16. Funding for the Global Strategy could be provided through the World Bank Multi-Donor Trust Fund, consistent with the outcomes of the Beijing Conference, and from individual donors. The assessments coordinated under the Global Strategy would provide a mechanism for prioritizing and legitimizing requests for funding from the World Bank Trust Fund. Budget targets for the Global Strategy will have to be developed.

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Press briefing  
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17. USMISSION UN ROME organized a press briefing by APHIS Administrator DeHaven on March 7. Wire services present included ADN Kronos (which is both an Italian and Middle East wire service), ANSA, Associated Press Print and Television, Reuters Print and Television, and VOA/CBS News. The storyline was picked up by the Washington Post, Boston Globe, among other U.S. affiliates, as well as international papers from Canada to Australia and China. Interestingly, Reuters also merged the briefing information with a headline on the death of a girl in China from AI. Overall, coverage was very positive, highlighting U.S. and EU cooperation with FAO and positioning DeHaven and the U.S. as actively engaged in coordination efforts. These Rome-based journalists are rarely exposed to the U.S. position on AI and yet report regularly about the disease via other sources. USMISSION UN ROME hopes this is the first of many such briefings by U.S. officials who travel to Rome for FAO meetings on AI and other emergencies.

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U.S. Delegation Participates in ECTAD Conference Call  
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18. Second, in light of the USDA delegation visit to FAO to discuss ICS and the establishment of an AEOC-like (APHIS Emergency Operations Center) situation room at FAO, we were afforded the opportunity to sit in on a weekly AI ECTAD (Emergency Center for Transboundary Animal Diseases) conference call with FAO/Bangkok on March 9. FAO/Bangkok

staff (Laurence Gleeson and Wantanee Kalpravidh) provided an update on the USAID grant, mainly on the recruitment of technical assistance and international staff, but also highlighting planned workshops and training sessions as follows:

-- Progress on Bangkok's recruitment of technical advisors to work at the country and national level in Cambodia, Laos and Indonesia is almost complete. The Technical Advisor for Vietnam has already begun working.

-- National workshops for Cambodia, Lao and Indonesia are being organized as are "Train-the-Trainer" courses for same, while national consultants are being recruited to work on issues relating to lab equipment training.

¶ 9. FAO/Rome staff then went around the room providing updates, running down a list of countries which reported H5 outbreaks -- Pakistan, Serbia & Montenegro, Sweden, Myanmar, etc. Of note for West Africa, staff reported that three more states in Nigeria have been confirmed for H5N1, for a total of 11 states.

¶ 10. During an FAO/OIE meeting in Africa during the week of Feb 27 - March 4, FAO staff noted that Russia publicly stated that working with the U.S. they have knowledge of at least 11 countries infected in Africa (FAO staff in the room asked the U.S. delegation if we were able to confirm this information; none of the delegation members had any information that would confirm this assertion). It was reported that an FAO/Rome staff member would be traveling to Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone and Liberia, which could be added to the list of affected countries in Africa. On Azerbaijan, staff reported that the 7-year-old girl of the family of six who was hospitalized was now reportedly infected (Note: three family members have already died).

¶ 11. Other general matters:

-- FAO staff reported that the Dutch Government is providing short-term funds for the transshipment of samples to labs for testing.

-- An Argentine wildlife specialist was to begin a 2-3 week assignment in Rome beginning March 13, while a Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) specialist would be posted to Rome temporarily beginning April 1.

-- FAO's Gender and Population Division reported on its work in Turkey to conduct an assessment on the gender and social issues associated with AI control and its impacts on rural livelihoods. The ECTAD Socio-economics and Policy Working Group is currently developing and testing rapid assessment tools for use by FAO emergency response teams.

-- Lastly, during the week of March 13 FAO will host the 64th (UN) Inter-Agency Standing Committee meeting, which will include a session on Avian and Human Influenza (AHI) and Humanitarian Action.

¶ 12. USMISSION UN ROME will continue to disseminate widely FAO activities to combat and control Avian Influenza.

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